



**DRUG FOR HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE**—Drs. Robert W. Wilkins and William Hollander (right) announce at a press conference in Boston the discovery of a new drug for relieving high blood pressure.—AP Wirephoto.

## Doctors Say New Drug Lowers Blood Pressure

BOSTON, Oct. 15 (AP).—Discovery of a new drug for the relief of high blood pressure has been announced by two doctors at Massachusetts Memorial Hospitals.

The discoverers, Dr. Robert W. Wilkins, 50, and Dr. William Hollander, 32, said last night the drug—called chlorothiazide—may add up to 20 years to the life expectancy of some 20 million Americans who suffer from high blood pressure.

They said they tried the drug over a period of several months on 51 patients with "amazing, startling and exciting" results.

The doctors said that even the toughest cases of hypertension (high blood pressure) patients who failed to respond to all other forms of treatment, responded to chlorothiazide.

Dr. Wilkins, president-elect of the American Heart Association, said hypertension strikes some 20 million Americans at the average age of 32.

### Key to Discovery

He said the key to discovery of the effectiveness of chlorothiazide came about through study of kidneys.

Dr. Wilkins introduced rauwolfia serpentina, the base for most of the so-called tranquilizer drugs.

He said the heavy load placed on the heart by high blood pressure often causes congestive heart failure, in which the heart is unable to pump enough blood to meet the needs of the body adequately.

This condition, Dr. Wilkins said is usually characterized by edema, or swelling in the extremities, due to the presence of abnormally high amounts of body fluid. Even mild congestive heart failure, Dr. Wilkins said, may make hypertension resistant to the usual forms of treatment.

### Linked to Hypertension

Attempts to bring the body's fluid content back to normal by giving diuretics (drugs which promote the elimination of body fluids and salts through the kidneys) were made, the physician said, with the result that basic hypertension responded better to the usual types of treatment.

Dr. Wilkins said it has been known for some time that the kidneys as well as the salt content of the body are somehow connected with hypertension and that kidney disease produces high blood pressure.

Dr. Hollander and Dr. Wilkins reported that for seven

years they have been experimenting with diuretic compounds to determine if they could make standard drugs for reducing high blood pressure more effective.

Chlorothiazide, they said, initially was thought to be merely a diuretic compound, but they have discovered it also has a blood pressure lowering effect in its own right.

### Double Action

The doctors said that it now appears that chlorothiazide has a double action: It effectively reduces body fluid and salt; it also reduces blood pressure itself.

The physicians said the most striking characteristic of the drug, however, is its ability to step up the action of other anti-hypertensive procedures.

"When chlorothiazide is added to other therapy," Dr. Wilkins said, "it has a striking effect. It shows to best advantage as an adjunct."

The claim by Boston physicians that the new drug chlorothiazide produces "startling" results in the treatment of high blood pressure was not supported today by Washington physicians who have been working with it.

Dr. Edward D. Freis of Washington, who has been following the same line of inquiry with two colleagues, said today of chlorothiazide, "We don't claim it as a cure."

Both Dr. Freis and Dr. Robert W. Wilkins of Boston have had grants from the National Heart Institute for work on hypertension and have been pursuing their investigations for the same length of time. Associated with Dr. Freis at Georgetown University and at Mount Alto Hospital are Dr. Annemarie Wanko and Dr. Ilsa Wilson.

Dr. Freis said he will report his findings in a paper to the American Heart Association at a meeting in Chicago October 28.

He declined to elaborate on his statement until his report

is made to the medical profession.

Dr. Andrew G. Prandoni, head of the Washington Heart Association, said public discussion of the drug's use should wait for Dr. Freis' report on 55 cases. He described the drug as "not a cure, but another agent for the control of hypertension."